September 23, 1958

Dr. G. Ledyard Stebbins
Professor of Genetics
University of California
Davis, California

Dear Ledyard:

Thanks for your letter of the 19th, with appreciation for your interest.

To be quite precise, my affiliation will be a Department of Genetics. This is to be in the medical school however, this should have approximately the same relative impact on its orientation as does the location of the Genetics Department here in the College of Agriculture. However, undergraduate teaching responsibility will remain in the Biology Department in Yanofsky and Perkins' hands, but they will share a role in Genetics.

Although we hope to add an interest in medical aspects (in a sense roughly corresponding to an experiment station in agriculture) our primary role at Stanford will be much the same as it has been here: graduate training and research in genetics. Naturally we will just not be well equipped or staffed, at least at first, for the more agricultural or botanical aspects, but there is nothing in principle to preclude them after our primary responsibilities are taken care of.

Our curricular plans are not settled, but we will probably offer multiple options depending on the background and interests of the student. Most of your students would probably opt a Genet cs major based on general Biology and would do well to think of preparing for the Biology qualifying examination. But we are also prepared to accept preliminary training in chemistry, physiology, microbiology or medicine as the foundation of specialized graduate training in genetics. For my own part, I would stress undergraduate work in mathematics, chemistry and microbiology, but other patterns are feasible. I will be very happy to discuss your specific programs and look forward to applications from your graduates. (The Biology program here will have to do the reciprocating on this score).

In addition to Yanofsky, Perkins and myself, and Dale Kaiser in Biochemistry, the Genetics group at Stanford will comprise two additional staff members, I hope in mammalian and human specialties. This should give you some idea of our orientation, which will range from Neurospora, phage, and bacteria to mice and men and probably stress physiological more than evolutionary aspects. Whether we should undertake ultimately to expand to include programs in fruitfly and plant genetics is debatable. Meanwhile, a wise student would do well to take advantage of the different specializations in the several institutions.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Medical Genetics

STEBBINS G. L.